

innocuous, metaphor. For, whether the obligations are fulfilled or neglected, the right continues unchallenged and indefeasible.

A religious theory of society necessarily regards with suspicion all doctrines which claim a large space for the unfettered play of economic self-interest. To the latter the end of activity is the satisfaction of desires, to the former the felicity of man consists in the discharge of obligations imposed by God. Viewing the social order as the imperfect reflection of a divine plan, it naturally attaches a high value to the arts by which nature is harnessed to the service of mankind. But, more concerned with ends than with means, it regards temporal goods as at best instrumental to a spiritual purpose, and its standpoint is that of Bacon, when he spoke of the progress of knowledge as being sought for "the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate." To a temper nurtured on such ideas, the new agrarian regime, with its sacrifice of the village—a fellowship of mutual aid, a partnership of service and protection, ^{cf} a little commonwealth "—to the pecuniary interests of a great proprietor, who made a desert where men had worked and prayed, seemed a defiance, not only of man, but of God. It was the work of" men that live as though there were no God at all, men that would have all in their owne handes, men that would leave

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others, men that would be alone on the
earth, men
that bee never satisfied."¹¹ Its essence
was an
attempt to extend legal rights, while
repudiating legal
and quasi-legal obligations. It was against
this new
idolatry of irresponsible ownership, a
growing, but not
yet triumphant, creed, that the divines of
the Reformation
called down fire from heaven.

Their doctrine was derived from the
conception of
property, of which the most elaborate
formulation had
been made by the Schoolmen, and which,
while justifying
it on grounds of experience and
expediency, insisted
that its use was limited at every
turn by the